

Unknown Paper

AI Reviewer 1 - Comprehensive Review

This reviewer provides a thorough and balanced assessment

As an expert peer reviewer for a high-impact journal, I provide this comprehensive review following the specified structure.

** Step 1. Summary of the Paper**

This theoretical paper introduces the concept of the "calculus of death" - a framework analyzing how bureaucratic and data-driven systems transform moral atrocities into administrative operations. The authors trace a conceptual genealogy from historical biopolitical administration to contemporary algorithmic surveillance, arguing that classification systems evolve from acknowledging moral complexity to imposing epistemic closure through data management. Using the Palestinian case as a primary example, the paper contends that modern violence reveals structural complicity between Western rationality, technological administration, and the erosion of moral responsibility. The work synthesizes critical theory traditions (Foucault, Bauman, Arendt) with contemporary technology studies to analyze how bureaucratic language becomes an instrument of dehumanization.

** Step 2. Evaluation Criteria**

****1. Originality / Novelty**** *Qualitative Critique*: The paper synthesizes well-established critical theory traditions rather than presenting fundamentally new theoretical frameworks. While the application to contemporary algorithmic systems represents some extension of existing work, the core theoretical moves (bureaucratic rationality enabling violence, classification systems producing erasure) are well-documented in the cited literature. The specific framing as "calculus of death" offers some conceptual novelty, but primarily repackages existing ideas. *Score*: 5/10

****2. Scientific Rigor / Methodology**** *Qualitative Critique*: As a philosophical/theoretical analysis, the paper lacks empirical grounding or systematic methodology. The argument proceeds through selective citation and conceptual analysis rather than rigorous demonstration. The Palestinian case serves as an illustration rather than being systematically analyzed - there is no methodological framework for case selection or analysis. The paper makes strong claims about contemporary algorithmic systems without examining specific technical mechanisms or providing evidence of their operation in the Palestinian context. *Score*: 3/10

****3. Clarity \ Presentation**** *Qualitative Critique*: The writing is dense with theoretical terminology and could benefit from clearer exposition of core concepts. The structure follows conventional academic format, but the argument progression could be more logically developed. The abstract and conclusion accurately represent the paper's claims, though the conclusion contains some over-

statement regarding the paper's contributions. Figures and tables are absent, which might have helped illustrate complex conceptual relationships. *Score*: 6/10

****4. Reproducibility \ Transparency**** *Qualitative Critique*: As a theoretical paper, traditional reproducibility standards don't directly apply. However, the paper lacks transparency in its analytical method - it's unclear how the authors move from cited literature to their conclusions. No data or analytical frameworks are provided that would allow others to apply the "calculus of death" concept to other cases. The selective use of the Palestinian example without methodological justification raises concerns about analytical transparency. *Score*: 3/10

****5. Significance \ Impact**** *Qualitative Critique*: The topic addresses important questions about technology, bureaucracy, and violence. However, the paper's impact is limited by its theoretical nature and lack of empirical grounding. While the synthesis of critical theory with technology studies could interest scholars in these fields, the paper is unlikely to influence policy or practice without more concrete analysis. The strong political claims may limit its reception in mainstream academic venues. *Score*: 4/10

****6. Ethics \ Integrity**** *Qualitative Critique*: The paper makes serious allegations about systematic violence without providing sufficient evidence or methodological justification. The use of the Palestinian case appears more polemical than analytical, raising concerns about scholarly objectivity. While the authors acknowledge their work is theoretical rather than empirical, this acknowledgment doesn't adequately address the ethical responsibility when making claims about ongoing violence. No conflicts of interest are disclosed. *Score*: 2/10

**** Step 3. Specific Suggestions for Improvement****

****Major Flaws Requiring Revision:**** 1. Develop a clear methodological framework for theoretical analysis that specifies how evidence is evaluated and conclusions are reached 2. Either provide systematic empirical analysis of the Palestinian case or reframe the paper as purely theoretical without using specific contemporary examples 3. Substantiate claims about algorithmic systems with specific technical analysis rather than theoretical extrapolation 4. Address counterarguments and limitations of the critical theory tradition being employed 5. Clarify the relationship between historical cases of bureaucratic violence and contemporary algorithmic systems with more nuanced analysis

****Minor Flaws:**** 1. Reduce reliance on theoretical jargon where plain language would suffice 2. Improve logical flow between sections 3. Provide clearer definitions of key terms early in the paper 4. Address the literature on beneficial uses of bureaucratic and data systems for comparative balance

****Additional Analyses to Strengthen Manuscript:**** 1. Systematic analysis of specific algorithmic systems used in governance 2. Comparative analysis of multiple cases to demonstrate the framework's utility 3. Engagement with literature challenging the critical theory perspective employed 4. Development of criteria for identifying when bureaucratic systems cross into "calculus of death" territory

**** Step 4. Final Decision \ Justification****

****Final Score****: 3/10

****Recommendation****: Reject

****Justification**:** This recommendation is based on fundamental methodological and evidentiary shortcomings that cannot be addressed through minor revisions. The paper makes serious claims about contemporary violence while providing insufficient evidence or systematic analysis to support these claims. The theoretical framework, while drawing on established critical traditions, is applied in ways that lack methodological rigor. The use of the Palestinian case appears more as political advocacy than scholarly analysis, raising concerns about objectivity and scholarly integrity.

While the topic is important and the synthesis of critical theory with technology studies has potential value, the current manuscript lacks the scholarly rigor expected for publication in a high-impact journal. The paper would require complete restructuring with either: (1) development of a rigorous methodological framework for theoretical analysis with systematic engagement with evidence, or (2) reframing as an empirical study with appropriate data collection and analysis. The current hybrid approach - making strong empirical claims while acknowledging the paper is purely theoretical - is methodologically unsound.

The paper's significant ethical concerns, particularly regarding the use of contested contemporary cases without adequate methodological justification, further support the rejection decision. For these reasons, I cannot recommend publication in its current form.

AI Reviewer 2 - Critical Review

This reviewer provides critical analysis and identifies potential weaknesses

****Review of "RATIONALIZING THE UNTHINKABLE: BUREAUCRACY, DATA, AND THE CALCULUS OF DEATH"****

****1. Overall Impression**** My immediate reaction is one of significant methodological concern. While the paper addresses an important and timely topic at the intersection of technology ethics, political philosophy, and genocide studies, it presents a sophisticated theoretical argument without adequate empirical grounding. The manuscript feels more like an extended philosophical essay than a rigorous academic study. The central concept of the "calculus of death" is provocative but remains abstract and under-operationalized. My primary concern is the gap between the paper's ambitious claims and the evidence provided to support them.

****2. Technical \ Scientific Assessment****

****A. Problem Definition: 3/5**** - The research question is clearly motivated and non-trivial, addressing how bureaucratic and data systems enable moral disengagement in violence. - The authors convincingly argue why this problem matters, particularly in contemporary technological contexts. - However, the framing is overly broad, attempting to connect historical bureaucracy with modern algorithmic systems without clear methodological bridges.

****B. Methodological Soundness: 2/5**** - The study design lacks empirical rigor, relying entirely on theoretical synthesis without systematic analysis. - Hidden assumption: That historical bureaucratic violence and contemporary algorithmic systems operate through sufficiently similar mechanisms to warrant direct comparison. - Methodological flaw: No clear criteria for case selection or systematic framework for analyzing the proposed "calculus of death."

****C. Results \ Evidence: 2/5**** - Results are largely conceptual rather than evidentiary. - Missing empirical validation of the central claims about algorithmic systems and Palestinian erasure. - Claims about contemporary systems appear exaggerated given the lack of specific technical analysis or case studies.

****D. Contribution to the Field: 3/5**** - The theoretical synthesis across philosophical traditions is potentially valuable. - However, the contribution is limited by the lack of novel empirical findings or methodological innovation. - The paper would likely be cited for its provocative framing rather than substantive advances.

****E. Writing \ Presentation: 4/5**** - The paper is well-written and logically organized. - Theoretical references are comprehensive and appropriate. - However, the abstract nature of the argument makes some sections difficult to follow.

****F. Ethical \ Transparency Standards: 2/5**** - No indication of empirical data collection requiring IRB approval. - Major concern: The paper makes strong claims about Palestinian erasure without providing transparent methodological justification for these claims. - Risk of advocacy bias overshadowing scholarly objectivity.

****3. Strengths**** - Ambitious theoretical synthesis across multiple philosophical traditions - Timely engagement with important ethical questions about technology and violence - Clear writing style and logical argument structure - Comprehensive engagement with relevant literature

****4. Weaknesses**** ****Major Flaws:**** - Complete lack of empirical evidence to support central claims - Under-specified methodology for analyzing the proposed "calculus of death" - Overreliance on theoretical assertion rather than systematic demonstration - Insufficient engagement with counterarguments or alternative explanations - Claims about contemporary algorithmic systems lack technical specificity

****Minor Flaws:**** - Some sections read more like political commentary than scholarly analysis - Inconsistent citation of specific examples to illustrate theoretical points - Overuse of theoretical jargon without adequate operational definitions

****5. Recommendations for Improvement**** ****Required Revisions:**** 1. Develop a clear methodological framework for analyzing the "calculus of death" concept 2. Include systematic case studies demonstrating how specific bureaucratic or algorithmic systems operate as described 3. Provide empirical evidence for claims about Palestinian erasure through data systems 4. Engage more substantially with literature challenging the paper's central thesis 5. Specify the mechanisms through which algorithmic systems produce the effects described

****Path to Acceptance:**** - The paper requires substantial empirical work or methodological refinement - Could be strengthened by focusing on a specific case study (historical or contemporary) and analyzing it systematically - Need to demonstrate rather than assert the operation of the "calculus of death"

****6. Verdict: 2/5 - Weak Reject****

****Justification:**** While the paper addresses an important topic and demonstrates theoretical sophistication, it suffers from fundamental methodological flaws that undermine its scholarly contribution. The complete lack of empirical evidence, under-specified methodology, and gap between ambitious claims and demonstrated findings make the paper unsuitable for publication in its current form. The work reads more as philosophical commentary than rigorous academic research. However, with substantial revision including empirical validation and methodological refinement, the core ideas could potentially form the basis of a stronger contribution.

The paper's fundamental weakness is that it describes a phenomenon (the "calculus of death") without providing systematic evidence of its operation or clear criteria for its identification. This makes the central concept difficult to evaluate or apply, limiting its utility for other researchers. The strong political claims about Palestinian erasure require particularly careful methodological justification that is currently absent.

Human Reviewer

Expert human review providing domain-specific insights

Reviewer: Amal

Scores (out of 10): - Question 1: 0.5 - Question 2: 0.5 - Question 3: 0 - Question 4: 0 - Question 5: 0.25 - Question 6: 0.5 - Question 7: 0

Total Score: 1.75 / 10

Reviewer Notes:

Submitted at: 2025-12-24 16:56:09

Aggregate Review

Combined assessment from all reviewers

Aggregate Review Report

This report combines the assessments from all three reviewers:

Individual Scores: - AI Reviewer 1 (Comprehensive): 0.0 / 10 - AI Reviewer 2 (Critical): 0.0 / 10
- Human Reviewer (Amal): 1.75 / 10

Aggregate Score: 0.58 / 10

Overall Assessment: The paper received an average score of 0.58 out of 10 across all three reviewers.

Final Decision: Reject

Justification: The paper does not currently meet the minimum standards for publication.

Generated: 2026-01-06 14:16:19